

## Healthy mental development in the first five years



### Early childhood impacts later success:

A child's brain will develop to 90% of its final capacity within the first 5 years of life. This early development is largely shaped by a child's home environment.

In Iowa there are over 240,000 young children ages 0-5. Of these approximately:

- 20% live in poverty.<sup>1</sup>
- 16% have parents with compromised mental health status including depression or anxiety.<sup>2</sup>
- 40% have mothers with **less** than "excellent" or "very good" physical or mental health.<sup>3</sup>

### Children's social and emotional health is essential to school readiness, academic success, and overall well-being for the individual child and our state

According to the *Heckman Equation*<sup>4</sup>, every \$1 invested in early childhood yields an average of \$7-\$12 due in part to less classroom interruptions, fewer incarcerations, and the child's continued ability to contribute successfully to society as they develop.

### All children are not school ready

It is conservatively estimated that 15-18% of school-aged children have a developmental or behavioral disability while only 7% are identified prior to starting school.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, over half of children in need of support are not getting adequate attention. Applied to Iowa, these figures mean that approximately 77,901 children in our classrooms may have an unidentified delay.

### Primary care providers are key

In Iowa, over 90% of children ages birth to 5 are seen by a primary care provider, giving providers the unique opportunity to play an important role in early identification and treatment for children's development.

### How 1st Five addresses the need

Iowa's **1<sup>st</sup> Five** Healthy Mental Development Initiative builds partnerships between health providers and public services to enhance care for young children and their families.

**1<sup>st</sup> Five** supports young children's healthy mental development and can reduce the prevalence of developmental and behavioral disorders which have high costs for Iowa's tax payers and long-term consequences for Iowa's health, education, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems.

### Specific outcomes

Since the beginning of the **1<sup>st</sup> Five** Initiative 9,776 referrals have been coordinated for over 3,471 children and families.

In 71 practices across the state over 280 **1<sup>st</sup> Five** medical providers, seeing a total of approximately 75,000 children, appreciate and rely on the support the Initiative provides.

Prior to involvement with **1<sup>st</sup> Five** only 33% of practices reported universal surveillance activities. After **1<sup>st</sup> Five** involvement that number rose to nearly 92%.

<sup>1</sup> Kids Count Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> (2005). Iowa Child and Family Household Health Survey

<sup>3</sup> Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (2007). The health and well-being of children: A portrait of states and the nation. *US Department of Health and Human Services*. Retrieved from: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/nsch07/state/iowa.html>

<sup>4</sup> Heckman, J.J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Institute for the Study of Labor*.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. 2005.